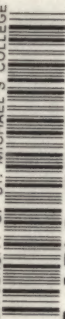


UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



MOVEMENT CENTENARY TRACTATES

CHURCH OF ENGLAND *and* THE HOLY SEE



"There can be no fulfilment of the Divine Purpose in any scheme of reunion which does not ultimately include the great Latin Church of the West."

—Lambeth Conference 1920

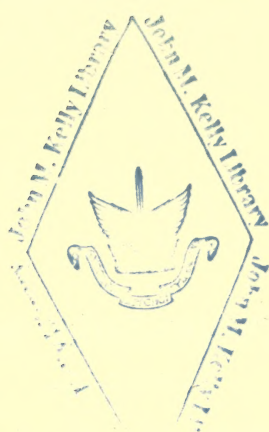
TRACTATE NO. I

WHAT DO THE CELTIC CHURCHES SAY?

By the Reverend SILAS HARRIS, M.A.
VICAR OF EGMANTON

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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE HOLY SEE
NUMBER ONE

WHAT DO THE CELTIC CHURCHES SAY ?

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It would be difficult to-day to discover any recognized authority on Celtic antiquity who would maintain, either that the Celtic Churches were not in communion with the See of Rome, or that they differed from the rest of the West in their attitude towards that See, and in their conception of the position occupied by the Successors of St. Peter and of the authority claimed and exercised by them. Yet, whether from ignorance or otherwise, the delusion is still sedulously fostered, especially in Anglican circles, that these Churches, even if they did not form (as one writer has asserted) "a Celtic confederation of Churches in opposition to the claims of Rome," were at any rate non-Roman in their innocence of Papal authority and in their subsequent rejection of it.

The following pages represent an attempt to set forth once more the real facts of the matter, and consequently to show how fully and readily the Celtic Christians recognized the Holy See of St. Peter. Limitations of space are responsible for a certain abruptness of treatment and for a minimum of comment on the earlier history.

Throughout it should be borne in mind, in view of the general title of the series of which this Tractate forms a part, that in these pages the word "British" or "Britons" bears its strict historic meaning, and signifies those of Brythonic race, represented to-day by the Welsh, Breton and Cornish peoples, while "Britain" is that Britannia which formed part of the Roman Empire, the word being used later in a restricted sense for those districts of the island where the British rule survived.

S. M. H.

Note that in the references:

H. & S. = Haddan & Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents* (Oxford, 1869—1878).

P.L. = Migne, *Patrologia Latina* (Paris).

P.G. = do. *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris).

H.E. = Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

M.G.H. = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.

The Witness of the Celtic Churches

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH IN BRITAIN ONE WITH GAUL AND THE WEST.

Early in the third century, Tertullian¹ and Origen² bear witness to the existence of Christianity in Britain, at that time a part of the Roman Empire. Its origins are wrapped in obscurity; the Faith may well have been brought here directly from Rome in the wake of the legionaries and merchants, or indirectly from Gaul, in the diffusion of Christianity which followed the persecutions and martyrdoms at Lyons and Vienne, A.D. 177. However that may be, the patristic references make it clear that the Christianity of Britain was regarded as an orthodox expression of the One Faith, and as being in close union with the rest of the Catholic Church. This orthodoxy and unity are impressively witnessed to in succeeding centuries, and the evidence is complete that it included a reverential acceptance of the position, claims and authority of the Successor of St. Peter in the Apostolic See of Rome. This evidence, and the corresponding testimony for the attitude of the other Celtic Churches, will now be set forth and its significance demonstrated.

The outstanding fact in the early Church life of Britain is the close relationship maintained with the Church in Gaul, and indeed with the Universal Church as a whole. The presence of three British bishops at the Council of Arles in 314 witnesses to the existence in Britain by that time of a fully organised Church, confined no longer to the Roman colonists but spread also among the British. Two of these bishops—Eburius of York and Restitutus of London—bear Celtic names, Latinised forms of Efwr and Rhystyd. In the lists of the Council they are included among the bishops of Gaul, which itself shows their close connection with that country. At this Council they join in condemning Donatism, and they accept the Roman Easter cycle current at that time;³ they clearly represent a Church one with the rest of the West and looking to Rome as its centre. Pope Silvester was represented at Arles by the priests Claudian and Vitus and two deacons, and at its close the Council addressed to him two

¹ *Adversus Judaeos*, viij. 2.

² *Hom. in Luc.* 13.

³ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Collectio*, II. 471.

letters, and sent its canons to be promulgated by him. The bishops begin :

“ To the most beloved Pope Silvester : United in the bond of our common charity, and in the unity of our Mother the Catholic Church we salute thee from this place, most glorious Pope, with the reverence due to thee.”⁴

Rome to them is “ the place where the Apostles daily sit (in judgement).” They ask him “ to issue letters to everyone according to custom,” witnessing to the fact that it was the usual procedure for conciliar canons to be approved, promulgated and enforced by the Pope as Head.

The condemnation of Arianism by the Council of Nicaea in 325, and the vindication of St. Athanasius at the Council of Sardica (343 or 344) were endorsed by the British Church.⁵ The Council of Sardica also regulated appeals to Rome, and a letter from the Council to Pope Julius states : “ It will seem to be best and most proper that the bishops of the Lord from every province make reference to the Head, that is, to the See of the Apostle Peter.”⁶

Both Athanasius (363) and Eusebius testify to the orthodoxy of Britain at this time, while St. Hilary of Poitiers, exiled in Phrygia, dedicates his *De Synodis* in 358 to “ the bishops of the province of Britain” (among others), and declares that they “ have stood firmly uncontaminated and free from all contagion of detestable heresies.”⁷ It is true that bishops from Britain were present at the Council of Ariminum (Rimini) in 359—three of them owing to poverty accepted the hospitality of the Emperor⁸—and that they subscribed its compromising formula, but a little before 363 they signify in a letter to Athanasius their full adherence to the Nicene definition of the *ὁμοούδιος*.⁹

The close connection with Gaul is further shown in the intercourse between the two Churches, evidenced by the visits of Gaulish bishops to Britain, and of Britons to Gaul. British pilgrims were continually passing through that country on their way to Rome—hence the later fame of St. Martin in Britain, and the special honour paid to him and to other Saints of Gaul. About the year 396, St. Victricius, bishop of Rouen—himself probably a Briton—came over to the island to compose differences and establish peace among the British bishops.¹⁰ Of the nature of these differences we are ignorant, but it appears that at this or some later period in his life Victricius applied to Pope

⁴ Mansi, *op. cit.* II. 466; H. & S. I. 7.

⁵ *Apology against the Arians*, Intro. 1. (P.G. XXV).

⁶ Hefele, *Councils*. II. 112-129.

⁷ St. Hilary, *De Synodis*. (P.L. X. 481; H. & S., I. 7, 9).

⁸ Sulpicius Severus, *Historia Sacra*, ij. 41.

⁹ Mansi II. 466-467; H. & S. I. 7-9.

¹⁰ St. Victricius, *De laude sanctorum*, I. (P.L. XX. 443-444.)

Innocent I "for the rule (*norma*) and authority of the Roman Church" to support him in his activities. In the Pope's reply the following words are significant:

"If any weightier matters come under discussion, let them, after episcopal judgement, be reported to the Apostolic See as the synod [i.e. Sardica] provided and a blessed custom requires."¹¹

The Pope is evidently recognized by Victricius as the final arbiter in discipline, and the Pontiff himself claims that position for Gaul and Britain as for the rest of the Church.

The most famous visit of this kind is that of St. Germanus of Auxerre. He came on a mission of aid and support to the British Church, when its faith was threatened by the spread of the Pelagian heresy, accompanied first of all by St. Lupus of Troyes in 429, and later in 446-447 with St. Severus, bishop of Trèves as his companion. These important events, and their intimate bearing on our subject, are reserved for fuller treatment later. Another enlightening detail is the fact that Faustus, a Briton, was abbot of Lerins c. 434, then bishop of Riez in 462, and that he continued to keep in touch with his native land, sending, for example, copies of his writings thither by the hands of a compatriot.¹² He was, moreover, present in a Council at Rome in 462.

This intercourse with Gaul was spontaneous and natural, and a constant factor in the Church life of Britain, and as a result there arose in all Celtic countries a great devotion to the great Saints of the Gallic Church. SS. Hilary, Germanus, Martin, Lupus, in particular, were very popular—a popularity attested by the appearance of their names in Celtic hymns and litanies, and by the numerous Church dedications to them. The significance of this affinity with Gaul has already appeared; it will be considered more closely in the next chapter.

¹¹ Hardouin, *Conciliorum Collectio*, I. 999, Innoc. Pap. *Epist.* ij.

¹² Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistolae*, ix. 9. (P.L. LVIII).

CHAPTER II.

GAUL AND THE HOLY ROMAN CHURCH.

It will be evident from what has been said that the Church in Britain and the Church in Gaul were wholly at one in faith, practice and discipline at this time, and that what is true of the one in these matters can be equally predicated of the other. The evidence adduced of their intercommunion has already shown incidentally that both Gaul and Britain looked upon the Roman See as the Centre of the Catholic world, that they recognized its occupant as the Successor of St. Peter, the Head of the Christian Body, and the Judge whose sentence was final in matters of difficulty and dispute. It will be illuminating to examine further the relations between the Church in Gaul and the Apostolic See, and as a result to realize how fully that Church accepted the Pope's supremacy and his teaching and ruling authority. The conclusions reached will enable us to see the more clearly the actual position of Britain *vis-à-vis* with Rome, since it shared so completely the outlook and standpoint of Gaul.

In our enquiry we are confronted first of all with the great figure of St. Irenaeus and the Apostolic tradition embodied in him. A witness of the terrible persecutions of 177 at Lyons and Vienne, he succeeded the aged Pothinus as bishop of Lyons. Greek by origin, he had spent some time in Rome, and lived for many years in Gaul. He was undoubtedly the most representative figure of his age, and, in the weighty words of Bishop Lightfoot, "he was connected directly with the Apostles and the Apostolic age by two distinct personal links, if not more. . . . His testimony must be regarded as directly representing three churches at least" (i.e. Asia Minor, Rome and Gaul). "He is backed by a whole phalanx of past and contemporaneous authority."¹³

His famous text on the Roman Church is well known to all.¹⁴ Writing c. 181-9, against the heretics, he refers them to the tradition of "that greatest, most ancient and illustrious Church, known to all, founded and established by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, at Rome," a tradition "which she has

¹³ Lightfoot, *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, 264-268.

¹⁴ *Adv. her.* III. 3. (P.G. VII).

from the Apostles.” “For to this Church, because of her mightier rule, every Church must agree (or, resort),¹⁵ that is, those who are faithful from all sides.” Much controversial writing has been expended on these words, but they plainly ascribe to the Church of Rome a pre-eminent position of rule (or authority) in relation to other Churches, and proclaim her as the norm of faith, with which every Church must agree (or, to which it must resort), if the tradition of the Apostles is to be faithfully kept.¹⁶ They are the more impressive in that St. Irenaeus is here professedly setting forth the rule of faith for the whole Church.

This witness of St. Irenaeus is a fitting prelude to the future connection of both Gaul and Britain with the Roman See; that witness was not forgotten in Gaul, and we shall find frequent instances of the exercise of Roman authority there, and of the recognition given as a matter of course to that authority. The letter of the Council of Arles has already been cited. St. Hilary of Poitiers, on his way home from exile in Phrygia for the Faith, visited Rome.¹⁷ Victricius of Rouen (c. 396-410)—the friend of St. Martin—whose visit to Britain has already been noticed, being accused of heresy by his enemies, went to Rome in 403 to defend himself before Pope Innocent I.¹⁸ In 417 Pope Zosimus set up the Vicariate of Arles, by which the bishop of that see became the representative and intermediary of the Holy See in Gaul. These privileges were withdrawn with equal freedom by Pope Boniface. Complaints and appeals from Gaul to Rome were frequent in this fifth century; numerous letters are extant from Pope Celestine to Gaulish bishops dealing with complaints which had been referred to the Holy See. In 445 accusations made against the great St. Hilary of Arles bring him to Rome in person to protest, and to justify himself. Pope Leo I curtails the jurisdiction of Arles,¹⁹ and Hilary submits. Indeed, the Popes at this time deal very freely with metropolitan rights in Gaul, and arrange and alter them at will. That such claims and actions were fully recognized is apparent from a letter of the bishops of the province of Arles, written in 450 to Pope Leo, in which they say that

“through blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles, the most holy Roman Church should hold sovereignty over all the Churches of the whole world.”²⁰

¹⁵ “Ad hanc . . . necesse est convenire.” (The Greek text is lost). “Convenire” is most probably “agree with”; — so Harnack and Stieren, among others. St. Irenaeus constantly uses this, or a similar word, for agreement.

¹⁶ Ziegler, a non-Catholic, says in his monograph on St. Irenaeus that “passing as it were in prophecy beyond himself, he anticipates the Papal Church of the future,” and marks out Rome “as the chief seat of Apostolic tradition, the centre which sustains and unites the whole Church.”

¹⁷ Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon*, II. (P.L. XX. 164).

¹⁸ P.L. LXI. 240-242.

¹⁹ Jaffé, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, No. 407.

²⁰ P.L. LIV. 881.

The loyalty of the early Gallic Church to the Papacy is beyond question. The canons in use in Gaul incorporated numerous Papal decretals which affirmed the rights of the Holy See. Not only was there ready submission to Rome in matters of doctrine and discipline, but the Popes exercised a real legislative and judicial power in Gaul. This is proved, not only by the particular instances already given, but by the decretals of Innocent I (401-417) and of Leo the Great (440-461), and is witnessed to by the imperial sanction given to the papal power by Valentinian III in 445. The Pope's authority ran freely throughout Gaul; the Caesarism of the Frankish kings of the Merovingian epoch lay yet in the future, and was not to establish itself finally before St. Gregory the Great had shown clearly and exercised freely once more the rights of the holy Roman Church over the Gallic Church.

All this is of capital importance for our subject, in view of the close ties which bound Britain and Gaul together, if the place accorded by the British Church to Rome is to be fully appreciated. Its bearing on the mission of St. Germanus and on the work of St. Ninian and St. Patrick will be obvious.

CHAPTER III.

THE CELTIC CHURCHES AND THE HOLY SEE.

I. THE MISSION OF ST. NINIAN.

Towards the end of the fourth century we find a Briton in Rome who, as Bede informs us, 'had been regularly [i.e. while living the monastic life] instructed there in the faith and mysteries of the truth.'²¹ This was Nynias or Ninian, "a most reverend and holy man," who returned to his own country as a bishop to evangelize the Britons of the province of Valentia²² and the Scottish Picts. His education at Rome is important, as we shall see—he may even have been consecrated bishop by Pope Siricius—but the Church of Gaul, in the person of St. Martin of Tours, with whom he stayed for a time on his way home, also influenced him greatly. At Tours, we are told, in the late life by Aelred of Rievaulx—upon which we depend for all the details of Ninian's life and mission—he resolved "to conform to the holy Church of Rome, not only as to the faith and the church services, but also as regards the construction of churches."²³ The church of stone built by him at Whithern in Galloway became famous under the names of Candida Casa and Magnum Monasterium; the building was apparently just completed in 397 when Ninian received the news of St. Martin's death, and it was dedicated to him.

St. Ninian's importance is twofold. His was the first monastic centre and school in Britain, and represented the firstfruits of St. Martin's influence in spreading the ideal of the monastic life. Whithern continued to be a centre of great influence and of pilgrimage throughout the fifth and sixth centuries; the Irish went there in large numbers, among them St. Finian of Moville, who was possibly the master of St. Columba.²⁴ The "Men of the North" (Gwyr y Gogledd), who came to Wales in the course

²¹ Qui erat Romae regulariter fidem et mysteria veritatis edoctus.—Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, IV. 4.

²² Formed in Roman Britain in 369, and which included Galloway.

²³ Life of Ninian, by Aelred of Rievaulx, c. 2. (A. P. Forbes, *Historians of Scotland*, V. 143).

²⁴ But see below on St. Finian of Clonard, p. 19.

of the fifth century, and thenceforth took the lead in the national life as the reigning dynasty, were not improbably converted to Christianity by St. Ninian's mission.

Ninian is important, too, as being the first direct emissary from Rome of whom we have certain historical knowledge. Prof. Hugh Williams regards Ninian's mission as evidence that at this time "the Bishop of Rome carried on a correspondence with the Churches in Britain, similar to Leo I in 454." It is natural to ask of him, educated at Rome as he was: What would be his teaching on the Holy See? His stay there would probably fall within the pontificates of Damasus (366-384) and Siricius (384-398). He would know of the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople, held in 381, which while anxious to magnify the new imperial city, had formally recognized old Rome as the first See, and he would have heard of the Synod of Aquileia, held in the same year, which had declared that "the Roman Church is the head of the whole Roman world" (and not only of the West), Britain being necessarily included within that sphere of influence. The emphatic declaration of the synod held by Pope Damasus himself at Rome in 382 would doubtless be familiar to him as to others in the City:

"Although all the Catholic Churches in the world are one bridal chamber of Christ, yet the holy Roman Catholic Church has been preferred to the other Churches by no synodical constitutions, but has obtained the primacy by the voice of our Lord and Saviour in the Gospel, saying: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church . . .'." ²⁵

In 385 Pope Siricius had written:

"We bear the burdens of all who are laden, or rather the blessed Apostle Peter bears them in us, who, as we trust, will protect us who are the heirs of his government in all things." ²⁶

Such declarations of the period could be multiplied. They must have been common knowledge and familiar teaching to all at Rome, and there can be little doubt that St. Ninian and all those taught by him would have very clear ideas as to the primacy and authority of the Successor of St. Peter in the Church.

II. ST. PALLADIUS AND ST. PATRICK.

There is some reason to believe that Ireland had been evangelized in part by British monks from Wales by 430 A.D., but it is the Popes who, exercising their jurisdiction and manifesting their solicitude, arrange for an accredited bishop to be sent to Ireland with the mission of making it wholly Christian. In 431 Pope Celestine ordained Palladius, the precursor of St. Patrick,

²⁵ v. C. H. Turner, in the *Journal of Theol. Studies*, Jany. 1900.

²⁶ Siricius, Ep. 1, 20. (Mansi III. 655 D; P.L. XIII. 1833).

to be Ireland's first bishop, and sent him "to the Irish who believe in Christ,"²⁷ in order that he (Celestine) might "make the barbarian island Christian."²⁸ Although St. Palladius seems to have died the following year, with his work scarcely begun, it nevertheless remains true that his mission witnesses clearly to the authority of the Roman See in Celtic lands, and, to quote Professor Bury, that he forms "the first link of the chain which binds Ireland to the spiritual centre of Western Europe."²⁹

The following year St. Patrick took up the work. He was a Briton, coming of a family with Roman traditions, and was born—it would seem—in South Wales—*Bannavem Taberniae* is most probably somewhere near the Severn.³⁰ We know that in his work he was supported and helped by British and Gaulish monks. Tradition associates him with St. Martin; he probably never knew the great Bishop of Tours, but he was certainly influenced by his spiritual and monastic ideals. St. Patrick himself speaks of his travelling "through Gaul and Italy, and among the isles of the Tyrrhenian sea,"³¹ while his most ancient biographer refers to the tradition that he spent some time *in una de insulis quae dicitur Aralanensis*³² The Bollandists, and Profs. Todd and Bury, all agree that this is a corruption of *Lerinensis* (i.e. the isle of St. Honoratus at Lerins); as a result of his sojourn there he came into contact with St. Germanus. St. Patrick's connection with Gaul is certainly well-established; there—probably during fifteen years—he received his training, and there he was ordained deacon by Amator († 418), and bishop by St. Germanus, successive bishops of Auxerre.³³ The relations of the Church in Gaul with the Holy See at this time have already been explained, and the connection of St. Germanus with Rome will be considered in the next section.

Persistent and well authenticated tradition also links up St. Patrick directly with Rome. Nothing is more probable in view of the Roman origin of St. Palladius' mission; the Pope would certainly endeavour to provide that he should have a successor. Tirechan, in the earliest life of St. Patrick, referred to above,

²⁷ Ad Scottos [i.e. the Irish] in Christum credentes a Papa Celestino Palladius primus episcopus mittitur. (Prosper of Aquitaine, *Chronicon*, s.a. 431.—P.L. XL. 495.) St. Prosper was at Rome in 430; the first edition of his *Chronicon* appeared in 433.

²⁸ Ordinato Scottis episcopo dum Romanam insulam studet servare Catholicam, fecit etiam barbaram Christianam. (Ibid, *Contra Collatorem*, xxj. 2.—P.L. LI. 271.) See below, p. 15, for the *Romanum insulam*.

²⁹ J. B. Bury, *Life of St. Patrick*, p. 57.

³⁰ Bury, *op. cit.* pp. 322-5.

³¹ Timorem Dei habui ducem itineris mei per Gallias atque Italiam etiam in insulis quae sunt in mari Tyrreno.—*Dicta Patricii*. (Whitley Stokes, *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, 301).

³² Tirechan (Stokes, *op. cit.* 302).

³³ Bury, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

writing c. 670, says that Patrick was sent by the same Pope (St. Celestine). Another biographer, c. 700, speaks of his setting forth "to visit and honour the Apostolic See, that is, to the head of the churches of the whole world,"³⁴ and of his stay with St. Germanus. Constant tradition affirmed that his mission was undertaken with Papal sanction,³⁵ and Prof. Bury considers it highly probable that St. Patrick visited Rome in person in 441, at the beginning of the pontificate of St. Leo.³⁶

St. Patrick introduced into Ireland—an island untouched by Roman imperial influence—not only the common Faith of the West, but the Latin language and liturgy and the spiritual jurisdiction of Rome. A well-known canon ascribed to him definitely prescribes appeals to the Apostolic See in more difficult matters;³⁷ Bury discusses these canons at length, and admits their genuineness, as also does Whitley Stokes. St. Patrick stood emphatically for the idea of the unity of the Church, and that in the sense of the union of all local Churches with the Mother and Mistress of them all at Rome. This is the only sense which the article of his baptismal creed, which affirms the *unitas ecclesiae*,³⁸ will bear when viewed in the light of his life and mission. His apostolic work in Ireland resulted in a Church within the unity of the Catholic Body, recognizing Rome as Centre and Head—a Centre ever faithful to the truth, and ever teaching without error.

Hence 150 years later, the Irish abbot St. Columbanus could say not only that Ireland had received the Faith from the Popes, but also: "I believe that the pillar of the Church ever stands firm in Rome," and could speak of the Pope as "the Pastor of pastors, . . . the Head of the Churches of the whole world."³⁹

III. THE VISITS OF ST. GERMANUS TO BRITAIN.

Pelagius, probably an Irish monk born in Britain, had made his way to Rome towards the end of the fourth century. There he began to set forth for the first time the heretical teaching associated with his name. This spread rapidly, and was later

³⁴ Muirchu maccu Mechtheni (Stokes, *op. cit.*, 496).

³⁵ St. Columbanus writing to Pope Boniface IV in 613, says: *Sed fides catholica sicut a vobis primum sanctorum scilicet Apostolorum successoribus tradita est, inconcussam tenetur.* (*Ep.* 4—P.L. LXXX., 275). Eric of Auxerre, the 9th cent. biographer of St. Germanus, probably expresses only the truth when he says that St. Patrick "went on his way to Ireland approved by the judgement, supported by the authority, and strengthened by the blessing" of Pope Celestine. (*Vita S. Germani*, P.L. CXXIV.)

³⁶ *Annals of Ulster*, Rolls ed., s.a. 441; Tirechan (Stokes, *op. cit.* 301); Bury, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

³⁷ *Si quae difficiles quaestiones in hac insula oriantur, ad sedem apostolicam referantur.* *Hibernensis*, xx. 5b. (Wasserschleben, *die Irische Kanonensammlung*, p. 61.)

³⁸ *Si creditis unitatem Ecclesiae? Credimus.* (Tirechan—Stokes, *op. cit.* 316.)

³⁹ See note 35 supra and p. 20.

(about 429) introduced into Britain from Gaul by a disciple of the heresiarch, named Agricola,⁴⁰ probably in the modified form of semi-pelagianism. Its progress there seems to have been such that the orthodox sought help to overcome it, looking most naturally for assistance to Gaul, with which we have seen the British Church was so intimately connected.

Constantius, a priest of Lyons, in an account written sixty years after the event, states that a synod of the bishops of Gaul nominated St. Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, and St. Lupus, bishop of Troyes, to undertake the work of resisting the heresy in Britain.⁴¹ St. Prosper of Aquitaine says, in his Chronicle, that "at the suggestion of Palladius the deacon,⁴² Pope Celestine sends Germanus the bishop of Auxerre, as his legate (*vice sua*), and the heretics being overthrown, guides the Britons to the Catholic faith."⁴³ These two statements are obviously reconcilable, the Pope probably confirming the choice of the synod, and arming its nominees with his authority. But if anyone insists that choice must be made between the two accounts, the witness of St. Prosper must be accepted as of far greater value than that of what Loofs calls the "*fabulosa vita*"⁴⁴ written by Constantius. Prosper was himself a Gaul and contemporary with the facts he records; the first edition of his Chronicle appeared only four years after the beginning of St. Germanus's mission. Moreover, he visited Rome before 432, and later, he was secretary to Pope Leo and so in a position to know the facts at first hand. As Dr. Hugh Williams says: "It is impossible not to accept the clean-cut definite evidence of Prosper."

The two bishops were engaged on the work of confuting the heresy in Britain from 429-431. We are told that they preached everywhere—in the churches, at the crossways, in the streets, and in the country—and that they were successful in recalling the people to the orthodox faith. On their return to Gaul they would be in a position to give St. Patrick news of Ireland, and probably to arrange that he should go there. A recrudescence of the false teaching brought St. Germanus to Britain a second time—on this occasion with Severus, bishop of Trèves, as his companion^{44a}—in 447, when the heresy was finally crushed.

⁴⁰ Prosper, *Chronicon* (M.G.H. Auct. Ant. ix.: *Chron. Min.* I. 472).

⁴¹ Constantius, *De vita Germani*. (H. & S. I. 16-19). Bede derives all his information from Constantius.

⁴² Probably the same who became first bishop of Ireland two years later; vide *supra*, p. 11.

⁴³ Ad insinuationem Palladii diaconi Papa Celestinus Germanum Antissiodorensem episcopum vice sua mittit, et deturbatis hereticis, Britannos ad catholicam fidem dirigit.—Prosper, *Chronicon*, s.a. 429 l.c. (H. & S. I. 16; P.L. XL. 594.)

⁴⁴ Fr. Loofs, *De Antiqua Britonum Scotorumque Ecclesia*. p. 9; cf. pp. 23-24. See also Dr. Hugh Williams, *Christianity in Early Britain*, pp. 217, 220, 223-4.

^{44a} H.E. I. 21.

His mission is an outstanding instance of the exercise by the Holy See of its jurisdiction and authority over the Celtic Church in Britain, and of the care taken by the Pope to maintain the orthodoxy of that Church. Prosper says explicitly that by rooting out the heresy the Pope was taking pains to preserve the Roman island (Britain) Catholic, just as, by sending Palladius, he was making the barbarian (i.e. non-Roman) island Christian.⁴⁵

We are left in no doubt, either of Celestine's own idea of the Papal prerogatives, or of the position ascribed to the Holy See by the Church as a whole at this period which saw the missions of St. Germanus, St. Palladius and St. Patrick to the Celtic countries. Celestine says in one of his letters: "The sanctions of the blessed and Apostolic See may not be violated,"⁴⁶ while the declaration of his legate, Phillip, to the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus in 431, embodied in the Acta of that Council, is well known:

"There is no doubt, indeed it is known to every age, that the holy and most blessed Peter, prince and head of the Apostles, the column of faith and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ, Saviour and Redeemer of the human race, that to him was given the power of forgiving and retaining sins, who up to this time and always lives and executes judgement in his successors."⁴⁷

It is sufficient here to call attention to this statement and acceptance of the Pope's universal authority at the very time of St. Germanus's mission to the Church in Britain.⁴⁸

Two matters may be briefly touched upon at this point as illustrating further the normal relationship of Britain to Rome about this time. In 445, two years before the second visit of St. Germanus, the Emperor Valentinian III issued a rescript commanding all the provinces of the Empire to accept the decisions and respect the authority of the Roman Pontiff (St. Leo I). That the Britons at this time, despite the quite recent withdrawal of the legions and of the fact that Valentinian could no longer protect them from their enemies, still considered themselves as belonging to the Empire is shown vividly by their letter to Aëtius, the chief minister of the Western Empire and the very official charged with the enforcement of the rescript in Gaul. This complaint is addressed to Aëtius during his third consulate⁴⁹ (i.e. c. 447), and appeals for his help against the incursions of the barbarians. As St. Germanus was in Britain that same year, and as we know that he afterwards went to Ravenna to meet Aëtius,⁵⁰ he may very

⁴⁵ Dum Romanam insulam studet servare catholicam fecit etiam barbaram christianam.—Prosper, *Contra Collatorem*, xxj. 2. (P.L. LI. 271.)

⁴⁶ St. Celestine, *Ep.* xxj. c. 11 sec. 12. (P.L. XLIX.)

⁴⁷ Mansi, IV. 1295 B.

⁴⁸ For a fuller treatment see No. 3 of this series.

⁴⁹ Agitio ter consuli gemitus Britannorum—Gildas, *Epistola*, c. 20.

⁵⁰ *Vita S. Germani*, II. j. 62.

well have conveyed to him this letter from the British. What is clear from the incident is that Britain certainly considered itself a province of the Empire in the sense of Valentinian's rescript.

Chance has preserved for us an actual instance a few years later of the exercise of Pope Leo's jurisdiction in Britain, and of its recognition by the Church there.⁵¹ The tenth century Harleian MS. 3859 contains a valuable Welsh chronicle (the so-called *Annales Cambriae*),⁵² which in its oldest recension has for its first entry the following :

ix An'. Pasca commutatur super diem dominicum cum
[i.e. a]⁵³ papa leone episcopo rome.

Welsh scholars have shown that this chronicle begins with the year 445 ("Annus j" of the MS.), so that this entry records that in 453 the British churches accepted a papal decision of St. Leo in the matter of Easter observance. (The year 453 is an error for 455—a confusion of the chronicler's.) This ordinance had reference, not to the later disputes over varying Easter cycles, but to an adjustment made by Rome in connection with the frequent difficulties of computation. Such adjustments had been made at Rome, first in 447, and then in 455, and this records the acceptance by Britain of the latter change, for at this time Rome and Britain followed the same cycle.⁵⁴ Its importance here is that it shows that in the middle of the fifth century, before the barbarian invasions had reached their intensity, when communication with the Continent was still normal and easy, a Roman ordinance is obeyed as a matter of course and accepted as a natural exercise of legitimate authority on the part of the Pope.⁵⁵ The British Church was evidently wholly at one with the Fathers of Chalcedon, who but four years previously (451) at the Fourth Ecumenical Council had hailed Leo's letter to Flavian with cries of "Peter hath spoken through Leo,"⁵⁶ and who had said in their letter to Leo himself that he it was to whom was "entrusted by the Saviour the guardianship of the Vine," and that he was their "leader as a head to the members."⁵⁷

IV. THE SAINTS OF THE SIXTH CENTURY.

In Britain the work and memories of SS. Germanus and Lupus were venerated beyond measure; St. Germanus became a national hero. Their influence had not only been decisive in over-

⁵¹ At the very time when St. Prosper, who records St. Germanus's mission was Papal secretary.

⁵² Reprinted in *Y Cymmrodor*, ix. 152.

⁵³ "cum" is a brittonism for "a."

⁵⁴ Leo makes known the change in 454 to "the bishops of the Gauls and Spain" (Ep. 138), and under *Galliae* Britain would be included.—Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

⁵⁵ See Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 192, 410.

⁵⁶ Hardouin, *op. cit.* II. 305 E.

⁵⁷ Mansi, VI. 147.

coming incipient heresy in the island, but catholic orthodoxy had been immensely strengthened by their campaign.⁵⁸ In addition they had done much to propagate the monasticism of Lerins, with its traditions of discipline and organisation.⁵⁹ This twofold influence would live on and bear much fruit, first of all in the life and work of St. Illtud⁶⁰—himself possibly ordained by St. Germanus—St. Paulinus, and St. Cadog in South Wales, and then in the efflorescence of sanctity and apostolic work in the whole of Wales and Brittany throughout the sixth century.

The outstanding figures of that century are St. David (Dewi Sant) and St. Gildas, both of whom exercised very great influence in Wales, in Ireland and in Brittany. Tradition ascribes to St. David not only great activity in spreading faith, devotion and the monastic ideal in Wales, but represents him also as taking a prominent part in Church government and synodical rule, his efforts in these directions being invariably connected with the authority of Rome.⁶¹ Such tradition may go astray in details, but the broad fact stands out clearly that St. David stood for a Catholicism which looked to Rome as to its natural centre. Speaking of this period, Prof. Jacques Chevalier, a careful and critical writer on our subject, says it is animated by "a Catholic spirit . . . free from all singularity, narrowness or provincialism, in perfect conformity with the doctrine of Rome and of the great Churches of the West."⁶² . . . It was at Rome that this Catholicism had its *point d'appui* and its centre."⁶³

St. Gildas is of particular importance, not only for his influence on the British, Irish and Armorican Churches in the sixth century, but also because his *Epistola* is the only insular contemporary record available for our use. In this denunciatory homily, written c. 540, in which he castigates the princes, clergy and people of Britain, there is, of course, no *ex professo* treatment of history or doctrine, but his language and attitude bear valuable, if unconscious, witness, to the way in which he and his fellow-countrymen regarded Rome.⁶⁴ He reflects the mind of those who had lived under the Empire and who had come to regard Rome as

⁵⁸ By the time that Europe was overrun by pagan and Arian barbarians, fifty years later, "fully Catholic districts existed only in the north-west corner of Gaul, and in Wales and Ireland." (Dom Cuthbert Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, p. 8).

⁵⁹ St. Lupus had been a monk at Lerins.

⁶⁰ Egregius magister Britannorum.—*Vita S. Samsoni*.

⁶¹ Ex his igitur duabus synodis omnes nostre patrie ecclesie modum et regulam romana auctoritate acceperunt.—*Vita S. Davidis*. (W. J. Rees, *Lives of the Cambro-British Saints*, p. 139). *Y Cymmrodor*, xxiv. 4-28.

⁶² Prof. Jacques Chevalier, *Essai sur la formation de la Nationalité et les Reveils Religieux au Pays de Galles*, p. 335.

⁶³ *ibid. op. cit.* p. 336.

⁶⁴ "Gildas was Roman to the finger-tips."—Prof. J. E. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, I., 139.

the *communis patria*.⁶⁵ They were proud to think of themselves as *cives*;⁶⁶ to them the Picts and Saxons who invade their province are *barbari*,⁶⁷ the latter "the whelps from the kennels of barbarism." Conscious that they were part of the greater Roman world, they had learnt the meaning and the value of unity and universality; they are themselves *Romani*, and their country, Britannia, is *Romania*;⁶⁸ they bear the *nomen Romanum*; Latin is *nostra lingua*; *Britannia* is that ever-contracting part of the island where the Britons, with their Roman traditions, continue to bear rule.⁶⁹ All this is of immense importance when the outlook of the British with reference to Christian Rome is under consideration. For to them, just as the Empire had stood for civil unity, so the world-wide Church, with its centre at Rome, stood for religious unity. Christian Rome was to them as natural a concept as imperial Rome had become since their incorporation into the Empire. They found universality realized once more in the Successor of St. Peter, the Head and representative of the Universal Church. "Roman patriotism penetrated and reinforced their sense of Catholic unity. Gildas has his eyes turned towards Christian Rome, where the Successor of St. Peter dwells, as towards the head of the new society which the Church has built on the ruins of that imperial society which she perpetuates."⁷⁰ For him, as for the Catholic world, St. Peter is "the prince of the Apostles," "the keybearer of the kingdom of heaven"; while his use of the phrase *sedem Petri Apostoli*⁷¹ for the episcopal office itself presupposes the Roman tradition which lies behind the use of the words. He implies that the British clergy have recourse to Rome and recognize its jurisdiction, when he speaks of their crossing the seas and travelling over spacious regions to obtain ecclesiastical benefices.

Many facts, indeed, witness to the close and frequent relations between the British Church and Rome. Tradition credits both St. Gildas and St. Cadog, as well as St. Kentigern, among many other British Saints, with a visit to the City. This is not at all improbable, for Rome remained always the principal place of pilgrimage for the Celts, and such visits were extremely frequent during the fifth and sixth centuries. Their veneration for the City, the *locus Petri*, was unbounded, and their desire to visit it intense. The exclamation of St. Molua († c. 609) to his master, St. Maedoc, is typical of this eagerness: *Nisi videro*

⁶⁵ Seneca.

⁶⁶ cf. St. Patrick's similar use: *Non dico civibus meis neque civibus sanctorum Romanorum* . . . — *Epistle to Coroticus*.

⁶⁷ It is amusing to find Bede two centuries later imitating this language and, himself sprung from the *barbari* who had never known the Empire, using the term of the British with their genuine Roman tradition!

⁶⁸ Gildas, *De excidio*, c. 7. cf. the *Romana insula* of Prosper *supra* p. 15.

⁶⁹ So Asser uses *Britannia* of Wales. *De rebus gestis Aelfredi*, c. 14.

⁷⁰ Chevalier, *op. cit.* p. 336.

⁷¹ Gildas, *Epistola*, c. 66. cf. his use of the phrase *apostolica sedes*, c. 92.

*Romam, cito moriar.*⁷² In Wales the holy isle of Bardsey, the most sacred shrine of the country, was to the British "the Rome of Britain."⁷³ It must be remembered that communication with the Continent was by no means abruptly terminated by the departure of the legions early in the fifth century; Britons are found fighting for the Empire on the Continent late in the same century.

St. Gildas also incidentally shows, by his acceptance and use of the Vulgate version of the Latin Scriptures, that the monastic movement which he represents was permeated with the Roman spirit, and that it looked to Rome for authority and guidance. Prof. Chevalier concludes a careful study of this whole period with the considered judgement: "Among the British peoples of the sixth century, David and Gildas were the representatives and apostles of Catholic unity; they destroyed the remnants of paganism and of the pelagian heresy; they catholicized the nation and attached it by strong links to Rome, the centre of the Western world."⁷⁴

The Roman outlook of St. David and St. Gildas is the more important when it is remembered that they exercised a considerable influence on the Irish Saints of the Second Order (c. 544-598). St. Molac, St. Finnbar of Cork, St. Maedoc of Ferns, St. Finian, founder of Clonard (c. 520), all studied under St. David at Menevia and returned to Ireland imbued with his spirit. St. Finian in turn had for his disciples, St. Kieran of Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan, founder of Clonfert—who also visited Gildas—and St. Columba, the great founder of Hy or Iona.⁷⁵ The later reputation of the Irish schools was due largely to this inspiration from the Welsh centres of monasticism. In 565 St. Gildas was invited to Ireland to restore religious discipline, and was consulted by St. Finian.⁷⁶ A new liturgy was introduced into Ireland by SS. David, Gildas and Cadog.⁷⁷ In the same way the great Saints of Brittany, many of them themselves Britons—SS. Paul Aurelian, Samson, Magloire, Malo—came under the influence of the same movement and its leaders in Britain, and showed forth its spirit and ideals in their work.

St. Columbanus (540-615), the founder of Fontaines, Luxeuil and Bobbio between 590 and 615, received the same British

⁷² *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae e codice Salmanticensi*, 480.

⁷³ *Liber Landavensis*, p. 80.

⁷⁴ Chevalier, *op. cit.* p. 341.

⁷⁵ Columba is not mentioned in the Lives of Finian of Moville, whereas he is included in the number of disciples of St. Finian of Clonard in the extant Life of the latter Saint. Through Columba Lindisfarne and the Northumbrian Church received the fruits of the same tradition.

⁷⁶ *Navigatio Gildae in Hibernia*—Harl. MS. 3859 ("Annales Cambriae"), s.a. 565. (*Y Cymmrodor*, vol. ix).

⁷⁷ A Davide episcopo et Gilla et a Doco Britonibus missam acceperunt.—*Catalogue of Saints of Ireland*. dated c. 730. (H. & S. II. 292-293.)

tradition through his master, Comgall—a disciple of David and Gildas—at the Irish Bangor, where he was a monk. His Rule and Penitential bear the marks of the influence of Gildas. His letters—written during his sojourn in Gaul and Italy (he died at Bobbio in 615)—bear unmistakeable witness to his acceptance of the authority and claims of the Successor of St. Peter, and bring out very fully the Celtic attitude to Rome. With some short extracts from among many which could be quoted from these this section may end.

Writing to a synod held at Chalon-sur-Saône in Gaul, c. 603, he says :

“ Do not regard us as aliens from yourselves : for whether we be Gauls, or Britons, or Irish, we are all co-members of the one body.”⁷⁸

In letters to the Popes, he addresses the Holy Father as :

“ the head of all the Churches of the whole of Europe, the most beloved Pope, the highly exalted prelate, the pastor of pastors.”⁷⁹

He declares :

“ I believe that the pillar of the Church ever stands firm in Rome.”⁸⁰

He is in no doubt as to why he venerates Rome—not for the secular fame of the Imperial City, but because it is the See of the Successor of St. Peter :

“ For, as I have already said, we are bound to the Chair of St. Peter : for though Rome be great and famous, by this Chair alone is it great and renowned among us.”⁸¹ “Through Christ’s two apostles you are almost heavenly, and Rome is the head of the Churches of the whole world.”⁸²

With clear voice this *traditionum Scoticarum tenacissimus consecrator* speaks not only for himself but for the whole of the insular Celtic world, and bears irrefutable testimony to its acceptance of the Papacy and its veneration for the See of St. Peter.⁸³

⁷⁸ St. Columbanus, *Ep.* 2. (P.L. LXXX.)

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, *Ep.* 5. (P.L. LXXX. 282.)

⁸⁰ Ego credo semper columnam ecclesiae firmam esse in Roma—*ibid.*

⁸¹ Nos enim, ut ante dixi, devincti sumus cathedrae sancti Petri: licet enim Roma magna est et vulgata, per istam cathedram tantum apud nos est magna et clara.—*Ep.* 4. (*ibid.*, 279.)

⁸² *Ep.* 4. (*ibid.*, 280).

⁸³ Talis erat Columba. Claris enim verbis, clarioribus quam ullus aequalium ejus, principatum efficacem episcopo Romano attribuit.—F. Loofs, *op. cit.* p. 95.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WITNESS OF THE LITURGIES AND OTHER EVIDENCE.

At this point some considerations will be noticed which support and emphasize what we have already seen from the historical evidence was the orthodox attitude of the Celtic Churches towards Rome.

I.—LITURGY.

The Celtic liturgies are to be classified as local varieties of the Gallican rite. The fragmentary remains we possess already show traces of adaptation to the Roman rite, but an adaptation freely made at an early date by Celtic Christians themselves. Chief among these scanty survivals are the Stowe Missal, the Bobbio Missal and the Bangor Antiphonary, and to these we must look for knowledge of the main features of the Celtic liturgies. The Stowe Missal is the work of at least two original hands—asccribed by some authorities to the seventh and eighth centuries respectively—as well as of that of a corrector, Moelcaich, responsible for many of the rubrics. Some other authorities date the work somewhat later, but competent critics agree that the Old Irish of the rubrics and the primitive liturgical features point to the Missal being a copy of texts belonging to still earlier dates.⁸⁴

This Missal has, in its older part, the Roman Canon of the Mass—headed, possibly by the corrector, *canon dominicus papae Gilasi*—with the usual petition for “N. our Pope, bishop of the Apostolic See.” In the earlier hand, too, there is a commemoration of Pope Gregory, and of SS. Lawrence, Mellitus and Justus (the successors of St. Augustine at Canterbury), and at the beginning of the Ordinary of the Mass there is found the prayer, *Deus qui beato Petro*, noticed below in the case of the Bobbio Missal.⁸⁵

The Bobbio Missal, though not of insular origin, witnesses to the liturgical practice of the Irish monks on the Continent in

⁸⁴ Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, II. xxviiij.

⁸⁵ *The Stowe Missal*, ed. by G. F. Warner (Henry Bradshaw Society), 2 vols. I, Fac-simile; II, Text.

the seventh century.⁸⁶ In this MS. the prayer just referred to is found at the beginning of the Ordinary, and begins thus :

“ O God, who when conveying to blessed Peter the keys of the heavenly kingdom didst deliver to him the pontifical power of binding and loosing souls”⁸⁷

The Missal has the Roman Canon, with the petition for “ our Pope of the Apostolic See.”⁸⁸ In the Mass for the Feast of St. Peter’s Chair there is this remarkable Collect :

“ O God, who as on this day didst give blessed Peter to be Head of the Church after thyself. We humbly beseech thee that thou, who hast given a Pastor so that none of the sheep may be lost, that the flock may be kept from error, wouldest save, by his intercession that (flock) which thou hast made.”

The *Post nomina* prayer—said after the reading of the diptychs—speaks of “such power being conferred on blessed Peter, that if he should bind none other might loosen,”⁸⁹ while in the *Contestatio*—which corresponds to the Preface of the Roman rite—Peter is spoken of as having the keys of heaven committed to him by our Lord and being

“ set on a throne of exalted dignity to sit in judgement on the nations. That Apostle is set in his place as prelate, in whose See the foundation of the Church is set; nor against this Rock shall the gates of hell prevail.”⁹⁰

The *Contestatio* for the Mass of SS. Peter and Paul declares :

“ From among the Apostles thou didst set blessed Peter as the foundation of thy Church.”⁹¹

In a Penitential at the end of the codex it is said of certain contumacious sinners : “ . . . the holy Apostolic See has separated them from the communion of saints.”⁹²

⁸⁶ “I am not able to understand . . . the difficulty in regarding it as (what the place of its origin seems naturally to suggest) an ‘Irish’ production—that is, proceeding from circles, from a community, still Scottish in religious spirit, and in some measure also doubtless in *personnel*.”—Edmund Bishop, *Liturgica Historica*, pp. 178-9. cf. *ibid.*, p. 58, note 3.

⁸⁷ *Museum Italicum* (Mabillon and Germain), tom. I, pars altera, p. 278; (P.L. LXXII, 452.)

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 279.

⁸⁹ Deum qui beato Petro tantam potestatem discipulo contulit, ut si ipse ligaverit, non sit alter qui solverit . . . precibus imploremus . . . (*ibid.*, p. 297; P.L. *ibid.*, 475.)

⁹⁰ homini de terrena compage claves coeli committeres, et ad judicandas tribus solium excelsae sedis in sublimi componeres Praelatus Apostolus ordinatur, in cujus consensione est fundamentum Ecclesiae: nec adversus hanc Petram portae inferi praevalent. (*ibid.*, p. 298.)

⁹¹ Apostoli Ex quibus beatum Petrum in fundamentum Ecclesiae conlocasti” (*ibid.*, p. 343; P.L. *ibid.*, 522-523.)

⁹² *ibid.*, p. 394.

An ancient Irish hymn, ascribed to Cummian, bishop of Clonfert († 661), and which was probably used in the liturgy, refers to St. Peter as “the Keybearer, the chief Pastor.”⁹³ Another speaks of the intercession of Peter, “to whom is given the powers of the Keybearer.”⁹⁴

These liturgical remains—scanty as they are—fully bear out the evidence of history as to the position accorded to Rome and the occupant of the Apostolic See in the minds of Celtic Christians.

2. THE WITNESS OF HERETICS.

The heresy of Pelagius has already been mentioned. Not infrequently in the history of the Church, the very heretics, by appealing to the Holy See and attempting to justify themselves before it, have incidentally borne valuable testimony to the position occupied by the Successor of St. Peter. Such is the case with Pelagius, a Celt (whether Irish or British by race) who left his native Britain to reside for long years in Rome, where he acquired a reputation for sanctity. But by 410, when he left for Carthage, he was already suspect. His disciple, Celestius, accused of heresy and condemned by a synod at Carthage in 411, at once appealed to Rome, but did not follow this up. The African bishops later denounced both Pelagius and Celestius and their teaching to Rome, and in 417 Pope Innocent condemned both “by the authority of Apostolic power.”⁹⁵ It was of this condemnation that St. Augustine used the famous words: *Causa finita est; utinam aliquando finatur error*,⁹⁶ which gave rise to the common saying: *Roma locuta est, causa finita est*.

In the same year Pelagius, in an attempt to justify himself to Pope Zosimus, the successor of Innocent, sent to the Pope a *libellus*, with his confession of faith. We are not concerned here with his adroit avoidance in this document of the real question at issue—his heresy on grace—but his testimony to the authority and inerrancy of the Holy See is significant for our subject when we remember his origin. He concludes his defence as follows:—

“This is the faith, most blessed Pope, which we have learned in the Catholic Church, which we have ever held and hold. If we have by chance set down aught in it unskilfully or without due caution, we desire to be corrected by you, who hold both the faith and the See of Peter.⁹⁷ If however this confession of ours is approved by your apostleship, then whoever

⁹³ *claviculari Petri, primi pastoris*.—*Liber Hymnorum*, ed. by J. H. Bernard and A. Atkinson. (Henry Bradshaw Society), 2 vols., I. 18.

⁹⁴ *Suffragia . . . Petri clavicularia cui data est potentia*.—*ibid.* II. 199.

⁹⁵ St. Innocent I, *Ep.* 182. (P.L. XX.)

⁹⁶ St. Augustine, *Serm.* 131. 10.

⁹⁷ emendari cupimus a te qui Petri et fidem et sedem tenes.

desires to blacken me will prove, not me to be a heretic, but himself unskilful or else ill-willed, or even not a Catholic.”⁹⁸

Pope Zosimus ultimately condemned Pelagius in the famous *tractoria*, sent to the bishops of the whole world, and therefore to Britain. St. Prosper has preserved a quotation from it: *Sacrosancta beati Petri sedes ad universum orbem sic loquitur*.⁹⁹ The Pelagians were banished from Rome, and St. Celestine, successor to Zosimus, took care to enforce the decisions of his predecessors and to root out the heresy, and we have seen how, in the words of St. Prosper, *nec vere segniore cura ab hoc eodem morbo Britannias liberavit*,¹⁰⁰ by sending St. Germanus to extirpate the heresy in this island.

3. THE WELSH LAWS AND CHARTULARIES.

We must be content with the mention only of how the codification of Welsh tribal law early in the tenth century by Hywel Dda bears witness to the fact that the canon law of the Church ran freely in Wales, and that as a consequence the supremacy of the Holy See was fully recognized.¹⁰¹ These Laws make express provision for appeals to Rome in connection with disputes over oaths and contracts,¹⁰² just as the *Liber Landavensis* does in matters of discipline. Hywel himself visited Rome, and though the tradition that Papal confirmation was sought for his Laws cannot be proved, it is certain that the provision made for recourse to the Holy See was no novel introduction, but that it represented the ancient, immemorial tradition and ideal of the Welsh Church as the successor of British Christianity.

The *Liber Landavensis*—a chartulary of the Church of Llandâv of the early 12th century—presupposes for many of its charters a much earlier written original, for place-names of boundaries, etc., in all documents prior to 1107, are found in their British or Old Welsh forms. Quite apart from 11th and 12th century references to Rome in the Book, it is noteworthy that an ancient Privilegium copied into it is stated to be confirmed by the authority of the Pope, and that the Welsh version of this (which accompanies the Latin) is throughout of the archaic character referred to. This contains such forms as “cymreith” (law), “bryein” (privilege), “eccluys” (church), “escop” (bishop), and especially the primitive obsolete preposition “dy” (for Med. Welsh “y,” Mod. Welsh “i” = to), and the words: *confirmatum apostolica auctoritate*, are rendered: “o audurdaut papou Rumein” (by the authority of the Popes of Rome), these

⁹⁸ In app. Opera S. Aug. vol. x. P.L. XLI. 1716.

⁹⁹ *Contra Collatorem*, xv. (P.L. LI.)

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*, xxj. 58.

¹⁰¹ cf. F. Walter, *Das alte Wales*, p. 231 foll.

¹⁰² *Code Vened*, II, 6, 2. cf. Wade-Evans, *Welsh Mediaeval Law*, pp. 52, 202.

words being in the same Old Welsh form.¹⁰³ This clearly witnesses to the existence of a much earlier document and carries us back at least to the period of the Laws, and probably earlier. It is just one of those significant details which combine to show how familiar and natural was the idea among British Christians of the authority of the Apostolic See.

¹⁰³ *Liber Landavensis* (Book of Llandâv), ed. by J. Gwenogfryn Evans, pp 118-120.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONFLICT WITH ST. AUGUSTINE.

From the beginning of the fourth century onwards, Britain had been assailed all along the east coast by bands of invading Angles, Jutes and Saxons; these gradually established settlements on the eastern side of the island, and in course of time carved out for themselves a number of petty kingdoms. They were wild heathen, untouched by the Roman influence or the Christian religion, and their barbarous ferocity and implacable hostility made it impossible for the British to evangelize them; the opposing peoples met only on the battlefield.

To these Saxon tribes in 597 came Augustine, a monk of St. Andrew's at Rome, sent by St. Gregory the Pope as the herald and teacher of the Faith. In reply to questions submitted by Augustine some time after his arrival, Gregory states: "As for all the bishops of Britain we commit them to your care,"¹⁰⁴ and in a letter written in 601 he tells him: "To you, my brother, shall be subject, not only those bishops whom you ordain, and those that shall be ordained by the Bishop of York, but also all the prelates of Britain."¹⁰⁵ It is manifest that Gregory at this time, like Pope Celestine some 170 years earlier, considered that his authority and jurisdiction certainly extended to Britain and its Church, and that he took it for granted that his claim would be allowed by all.

BEDE'S ACCOUNT OF AUGUSTINE'S MEETING WITH THE BRITISH BISHOPS.

In 602 or 603 Augustine arranged for a conference with the British bishops. For an account of this we are dependent entirely upon Bede, who tells us that the meeting took place at "Augustine's Oak"—probably Cricklade in Gloucester. Thither came some bishops and learned men from Wales, and Augustine "began to persuade them with brotherly admonition to preserve

¹⁰⁴ *Brittanniarum vero omnes episcopos tuae fraternitati committimus.*—St. Gregory, *Epistolae*, M.G.H., XI. iv. 64. (H. & S. III); H.E. I. 27.

¹⁰⁵ *Tua vero fraternitas . . . etiam omnes Britanniae sacerdotes habeat . . . subjectos.*—H.E. I. 29.

Catholic peace with him, and to undertake the common labour of preaching the Gospel to the heathen." A long discussion took place, in the course of which, even at this early stage, Augustine had recourse to "*inreparationes*," and to a strange and precipitate appeal to miracle as a mark of Divine approval. But no definite result was reached, save that a second conference was arranged, to which the British were to come in larger numbers after they had consulted their brethren.

This "synod," as Bede terms it, was held somewhere near Chester, before 605, and to it there came seven British bishops and many men of great learning, especially from the celebrated monastery of Bangor-iscoed near by, over which Abbot Dunod presided at that time. The British arranged that they should arrive last at the place of meeting, and Augustine's refusal to rise from his chair on their entry roused their resentment. Augustine demanded three things of them: "To keep Easter at the proper season; to complete the ministry of baptism after the manner of the holy Roman and Apostolic Church; and to join us in preaching the word of the Lord to the English." "But they replied that they would do none of these things, nor have him for their archbishop."¹⁰⁶

Uncritical and prejudiced writers have frequently cited this incident, as recounted by Bede, as though it afforded conclusive evidence of the rejection on the part of the Celtic Church in Britain of the authority of the Apostolic See. But it will be seen on closer examination to give no real countenance to an idea which runs so completely counter to the past history of the British Church, but rather to support by implication the traditional acceptance of that authority.

It is scarcely ever pointed out that Bede, although in the main a conscientious and trustworthy historian, is a distinctly hostile and partisan witness whenever he has to treat of the British Christians.¹⁰⁷ He is obviously filled with bitter prejudice and hatred against them; the strength of this dislike will be the more fully realized when it is remembered that by the time he was writing (731) the whole Celtic world, with the exception of Wales, had already conformed to the Roman discipline in the matters disputed with Augustine. To him they are "barbarians" and "rustic";¹⁰⁸ "a perfidious race" with "an impious army";¹⁰⁹ they are guilty of "indescribable iniquities."¹¹⁰ In speaking of them he loses his usual sense of proportion to the point of absurdity. Thus, e.g. for the Britons to continue to adhere to their tradition in matters of pure discipline is to be

¹⁰⁶ H.E. II. 2.

¹⁰⁷ "Bede speaks hard words of the British. He cherished, I fear, hard feelings towards them."—Hugh Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

¹⁰⁸ See note p. 18.

¹⁰⁹ H.E. *passim*.

¹¹⁰ H.E. I. 22.

“opposed to ecclesiastical unity,” to be devoid of “the grace of spiritual light,” and to reject “the true way of righteousness”!¹¹¹ In telling the story of the conference with Augustine, the British representatives are already to him *adversarii*.¹¹² It is only by noting carefully the significance of what such a witness says or omits to say that we shall rightly discern the truth.

DIFFERENCES OF DISCIPLINE AND NOT OF FAITH.

The most obvious thing to notice about the situation is that Augustine and the Britons are at one in all matters of faith. He approaches them on the assumption of their orthodoxy and of their agreement with him, and desires them to work with him for the spread of that Faith they hold in common. If so outstanding a matter as the authority of the Holy See—which loomed so large in the consciousness of Augustine—had been subject of difference between them, it would without a doubt have taken a foremost place in the discussion. But neither in the first nor the second conference is a word said about the Pope: his authority and claims are not so much as mentioned by either side. Had they been brought forward, we should certainly have known of it from Bede, who would have been only too glad, had it been true, to be able to hold up the British as schismatical in their attitude towards the See of Peter. But clearly all this, like other fundamental matters, was common ground to St. Augustine and to the British bishops; here they were in complete agreement, as indeed, we might expect them to be from the past record of the Celtic Churches.

The differences fixed upon by Augustine and to which his demands relate were thus not insurmountable, as they had reference not to faith but to discipline. That Augustine himself clearly distinguished between the two we know from his question to Gregory regarding the Churches of Gaul: “Since the Faith is one, (why) are there different customs in the Churches?”¹¹³ Agreement on the method of calculating the date of Easter had been a standing difficulty in the West for centuries past: already the Roman Church itself had adopted successively four different methods of computation. At this time, it is probable that the Celtic Churches still followed the cycle of 84 years of Augustialis,¹¹⁴ according to which Easter might fall on any day between the fourteenth and twentieth day of the lunar month—a cycle which was merely the old *supputatio Romana* for close upon 150 years before 457. Rome had changed its method twice since that time—in 457, when the cycle of 532 years of Victorius of Aquitaine

¹¹¹ H.E. II. 2.

¹¹² *ibid*.

¹¹³ Cum una sit fides sunt ecclesiarum diversae consuetudines . . ?—St. Gregory, *Ep.* M.G.H. XI. iv. 64, 2.

¹¹⁴ H.E. III. 4.

was adopted, and again some time after 525, when the cycle of 19 years, associated with the name of Dionysius Exiguus, took its place.¹¹⁵ The Celts were probably not ignorant of these—the supposed isolation of Britain and Ireland during the fifth and sixth centuries has been much exaggerated—and St. Columbanus, in one of his letters, has a lively criticism of the cycle of Victorius, which he declares was well known in Ireland and Britain, and which was considered ridiculous by the learned men there.¹¹⁶ The Church in Britain had obeyed (as we have seen) a decision of Pope Leo I in 455 with regard to Easter, and if the British still clung to their 84 years cycle after Rome had abandoned it, it was probably due to the fact that they knew that Gaul was following a different cycle still, and that the Holy See had not formally communicated the change to them nor expressly imposed its observance.

They probably knew, too, that St. Augustine—if Bede reports him correctly—greatly exaggerated the position when he implied that they were opposed in this “to all the churches which throughout the world agree in Christ,” or declared roundly that they acted “contrary to the custom of the universal Church.”¹¹⁷ At this very time—and even at the time that Bede was writing—the cycle of Victorius, abandoned by Rome,¹¹⁸ was still being followed in Gaul, and Augustine himself had been perturbed by other customs of the Church there, which varied from those to which he was accustomed at Rome. Had he possessed the largeness of spirit of St. Gregory, who had given him prudent counsel apropos of such difficulties,¹¹⁹ much of the trouble in Britain might have been avoided.

In spite of the many theories which have been advanced, it is impossible to determine the precise point in British practice with regard to Baptism in which Augustine considered a change to be necessary. In any case, it is scarcely likely that it touched the essentials of the sacrament.

To evangelize the English heathen had probably been up to this time a moral impossibility for the British Christians, in view of the antagonism which obtained, and the continuous warfare carried on, between the two races. Their future action in this regard was to be determined by quite other considerations.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ So the great authority, B. Krusch. But Poole (in the *English Historical Review*, 1918, pp. 57-62) contests this and claims that in Gregory's time Rome still followed the cycle of Victorius. Dom Gougaud (*Christianity in Celtic Lands*, p. 186) now accepts this later view.

¹¹⁶ St. Columbanus, *Ep.* 1 (P.L. LXXX. 261-2.)

¹¹⁷ H.E. II. 2.

¹¹⁸ But see note p. 27.

¹¹⁹ Ex singulis ergo quibusque ecclesiis quae pia, quae religiosa, quae recta sunt, elige.—St. Gregory, *Ep.* M.G.H. XI. iv. 64. 2.

¹²⁰ cf. Duchesne, *Bulletin Critique*, 1881, p. 265.

THE REAL ISSUE—REJECTION OF CANTERBURY, NOT ROME.

The real reasons for the rejection of these demands by the British are to be sought, not in the demands themselves, but in the view they took of the person and of the personal claims of Augustine himself. They perceived, or thought they perceived, in him a spirit of arrogance and pride which they considered boded ill for their relationship with him in the future.¹²¹ It appears even in Bede's narrative in his "inreparationes" of the "adversarii," his spectacular appeal to miracle, his refusal to show ordinary courtesy to those with whom he had come to confer, and his final threat to the recalcitrant British.¹²²

Though the factors of stubborn conservatism and racial antipathy would doubtless predispose the British bishops towards refusal, the precise reason why they actually rejected Augustine's proposals slips out in Bede's narrative when it is recorded that "they would not have him for their archbishop."¹²³ Although such a demand is not explicitly set forth in the preceding narrative, the British bishops had been led in some way to understand that the claim was being made,¹²⁴ not only that they should follow Augustine's personal direction in a common mission to the English, but that they should come permanently under the rule of the new and barely-established see of Canterbury in the territory of the Jutes. This is what they rejected so vehemently, and this it was which led them to cling to their traditional disciplinary observances as a practical and manifest sign of their independence.¹²⁵

The whole idea of such a subjection to a superior local bishop was in any case wholly foreign to their traditions and outlook. Opposition to centralised archiepiscopal rule—a rule for which Canterbury served as model in the West—was common in Gaul as well as in the Celtic Churches. The British Churches in Brittany and Galicia (Spain) were involved in the same controversies with their neighbours about matters of discipline (Easter cycles, tonsure, etc.), but the prominent feature in the dispute is not so much these particular details as opposition to metropolitan rule. The Breton bishops struggled constantly

¹²¹ St. Gregory appears to express his fear of this tendency in Augustine in his famous letter (beginning: *Gloria in excelsis*) of warning to him. Cf. especially: "You must fear lest amidst the signs which are done the weak soul should exalt itself presumptuously and inwardly fall through vainglory. . . . The soul therefore must be much kept down amidst signs and miracles, lest peradventure it should seek in these its own glory, and should exult in the private joy of its own exaltation."—*Ep. M.G.H.* XI. iv. 28.

¹²² H.E. II. 2.

¹²³ *ibid.*

¹²⁴ cf. Augustine's *obtemperare mihi*.—*ibid.*

¹²⁵ "It is a fair inference from the narrative of Bede that the claim of Augustine to exercise ecclesiastical supremacy over the whole island was the real stumbling block."—Prof. Lloyd, *op. cit.*, I. 177.

against the claims of Tours,¹²⁶ and appealed over and over again to Rome. The idea of an archbishop possessing by virtue of his office an effective authority over a subordinate episcopate—an authority such as Augustine and his successors maintained at Canterbury—was novel and strange, not only to the Celtic world but to other areas in the West. When St. Boniface, the Englishman, who was invited by Carloman, the brother of Pepin, in 742 to reform the Frankish Church,¹²⁷ endeavoured to institute archbishops on the English model¹²⁸ he met with sustained resistance and opposition from the bishops and others, and this in spite of the fact that he went as envoy of the Holy See, *Missus Sancti Petri*, armed with express papal authority for his plan. The truth was that *archiepiscopus* in Gaul, as in Britain, had up to that time been more of a title of honour and courtesy than of jurisdiction, and Boniface failed to bring about the change he desired to see effected.¹²⁹ Small wonder that the bishops of Britain, when faced with the notion a century and a half earlier—made more difficult for them because linked up with what they would regard as an upstart see in the territory of their enemies—should have resisted so vigorously and decisively. They would already visualise the time when an Englishman would occupy that see, an eventuality which materialised little more than half a century later when Deusdedit ascended the throne of Canterbury.

This opposition of theirs was, moreover, justified from another standpoint. It had never been the intention of Gregory to subject the British Church *in perpetuity* to the see of Canterbury. The privileges given to Augustine in this regard were strictly personal—intended for himself only, not for his successors. Thus, even with regard to the new Anglo-Saxon Church, Gregory makes it clear that the bishop of York is to be subject to Augustine's direction only during the lifetime of the latter. But he is to have the pall, and (writes Gregory to Augustine) "after your death he is to preside over the bishops whom he has ordained, without being in any way subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop of London" (i.e. of Canterbury).¹³⁰ In the same way, and not otherwise, is Augustine to have "all the prelates of Britain subject"¹³¹ to him, that is, as a personal privilege for his

¹²⁶ St. Samson of Dol attended a Council at Paris in 557 (Mansi, IX. 747), but he is not found at Tours.

¹²⁷ St. Boniface, *Ep. 1 in Epist. Merov. aevi*, ed. Duemmier, I. 299.

¹²⁸ "Boniface était un Anglais comme il en existe beaucoup: il ne connaissait rien au monde de plus parfait que ce qui se faisait en Angleterre. Dans son pays d'origine, il avait eu sous yeux une Eglise fortement constituée, parce qu'elle était soumise à un seul archevêque et que cet archevêque était délégué du pape de Rome. . . . En Germanie, en Gaule, il ne vit qu'une méthode à appliquer, la méthode anglaise. . . . Un Anglais s'est flatté d'imposer à l'Eglise gallicane l'organisme qui existe en Angleterre."—Dom H. Leclercq, in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, 449, 454.

¹²⁹ cf. Leclercq, *op. cit.*

¹³⁰ H.E. I. 29.

¹³¹ *ibid.*

own lifetime. If in his negotiations with the British bishops Augustine obscured this personal privilege by making it an inherent claim of his see, the British prelates—whether they knew of Gregory's letter or not—were clearly right in refusing submission, for they were unconsciously following the mind of the Pope himself. They were maintaining the independence of the British Church, not against the Apostolic See—with regard to which, in view of their past history, they could justly say with St. Columbanus, *Nos devincti sumus cathedrae sancti Petri*—but against the English see of Canterbury, to which the Pope had not made them subject.¹³² They were voicing their traditional right to be directly subject to the Holy See itself, and standing firmly at a critical juncture for what would be consistently maintained in later ages, with an unparalleled devotion to the Successor of St. Peter, by Hywel Dda, Giraldus Cambrensis, Llywelyn the Great and Owain Glyndwr.

THE CELTIC CHURCHES CONTINUE IN COMMUNION WITH ROME.

The issue of the conference with Augustine never meant that the British had either themselves rejected Rome,¹³³ or been rejected by Rome. The former proposition is clear from the whole of their subsequent history, until they were dragged into unwilling separation in the 16th century by that very see of Canterbury, which had subsequently, by Norman and Plantaganet violence, succeeded in imposing its rule upon them. The latter can also be clearly shown. In the first place, even the new Anglo-Saxon Church did not consider them to be separate from Catholic unity. Lawrence, the successor of St. Augustine, with his fellow-bishops Mellitus and Justus, in a letter to the Irish clergy, written in 609, calls them "our dear brethren, the lords bishops and abbots in the regions of the Irish,"¹³⁴ and a letter couched in similar terms was sent to the British bishops. What he and others, like Bede and Aldhelm, make matter of complaint is, not that the British

¹³² Pope Vitalian in sending Theodore to Canterbury in 668 gave him jurisdiction only over "the Church of the Angles," and the Popes, St. Agatho and St. Leo II (678-683), in rearranging matters connected with the jurisdiction of Canterbury and York, do so without reference to the jurisdiction of the British Churches in Wales, Strathclyde and Cornwall. In 787 Pope Adrian I sent his legates "to the Angles."

¹³³ "There is indeed nothing in the attitude of the British bishops towards St. Augustine, as recorded by our only authority Bede, which requires us to suppose that they laid claim to absolute autonomy. They did not recognize Augustine's commission to act as their superior and interfere with their ancient customs. But many another Church, perfectly loyal to the Apostolic See, has since then shown its reluctance to accept the dictation of one individual papal envoy and has obstinately contested his jurisdiction when usages of immemorial antiquity were menaced by his action."—H. Thurston, S.J., *The Month*, vol. cxxj. p. 131.

¹³⁴ H.E. II. 4.

are schismatic, but that they are uncharitable in their attitude towards their fellows, the Anglo-Saxon Christians. Lawrence is still ready to co-operate with them, as brothers in the common Faith. St. Aidan, who never abandoned the Celtic Easter, was, Bede tells us, "deservedly loved by all, even by those who thought differently about Easter, and was held in like reverence by the bishops themselves, Honorius of Canterbury and Felix of the East Anglians."¹³⁵ The two Anglo-Roman bishops clearly regard Aidan as sharing with them the communion of the Church Catholic. St. Aldhelm of Sherborne, in his letter to Geraint of Devon in 705, while he inveighs against the disciplinary usages of the British, makes it his chief complaint that the Welsh priests pharisaically refuse any communion or fellowship with the Saxons until the latter have done penance.¹³⁶ It is obvious that bitter racial feeling ran high on both sides, and that its existence undoubtedly hindered Christian intercourse. The whole Celtic world had been shocked by the massacre of the monks of Bangor-iscoed by Ethelfrith of Northumbria at the battle of Chester in 613 (or 617), but even the saintly Bede regards it almost with equanimity.¹³⁷ Later, especially under Theodore,¹³⁸ accusations of "schism" and even "heresy" were freely bandied about on both sides, but in general the bitterest enemy of the British does not dare accuse them of anything other than a conservative clinging to their own disciplinary practices, though there is sometimes included under these a condemnation of liturgical variation which was perfectly legitimate under the Roman discipline of the time. Thus an anonymous writer of the seventh century, evidently wishing to be as emphatic as possible, can yet speak only of the liturgy and of such a puerility as the tonsure: *Britones toti mundo contrarii, moribus Romanis inimici, non solum in missa, sed in tonsura etiam*.¹³⁹ Such a fragment represents the bitterness of an enemy concerned to magnify ritual differences rather than the accusation of disloyalty to the Faith brought by a theologian.

Nor is there any evidence that Rome herself regarded the

¹³⁵ H.E. III. 25.

¹³⁶ St. Aldhelm, *Ep. ad Gerontium*, P.L. LXXXIX. 87-92. M.G.H. *Ep.* iij. 231.

¹³⁷ cf. the Irish Annals of Tigernach, s.a. 613; "the battle in which the saints were massacred."

¹³⁸ But Pope Vitalian who sent him did not regard Theodore as likely to be an over-safe exponent of the mind of Rome. cf. H.E. IV. 1. He is given jurisdiction only over the Church of the Angles. Of the Canon in his *Penitential* condemning the Irish and the British it may be said (in the words which Mr. Edmund Bishop applies to the similar canon of the later synod of Celchyth): "The canon runs not as if coming from those whose preoccupation it is to correct irregularities and set them right; it is passion that speaks in this decree, which is a sentence of ostracism and an expression of racial antipathy."—E. Bishop, *op. cit.* p. 172.

¹³⁹ Pseudo-Gildas, *Epistola altera*, H. & S. I. 112-113.

Celtic Churches as outside her communion as the result of the rejection of Augustine; indeed, all the available data point the other way. In 610 Mellitus, bishop of London, visited Rome in order to discuss with Pope Boniface the affairs of the English Church.¹⁴⁰ Lawrence, archbishop of Canterbury, had just written to the Celtic bishops on the subject of the differences between them (see above, p. 31). Here then was an opportunity to delate the whole matter to Rome and get a definite ruling from the Pope himself. But there is no evidence that the subject was even raised by Mellitus on this occasion, or by any of the other numerous emissaries of the Church of Canterbury to Rome in succeeding years, nor if it was so raised, that the Holy See made any pronouncement. This fact will prevent us from attaching very much importance to the isolated charges of the Saxon Church in England against the Celts during the period of these disciplinary differences.

The record of the gradual abandonment of these traditions shows us the Holy See treating the Celtic Churches as being still under its care, and the Celts themselves acknowledging the Successor of St. Peter as fully as they had done in the past. Thus Pope Honorius I (625-638) wrote to the Irish Church—possibly in 628, when the Roman and Celtic Easters coincided—urging conformity in this matter with the practice of the Holy See.¹⁴¹ This was the first official and direct intimation of the change in Roman practice which the Celts had received, and they hastened to respond to that supreme authority which they recognized. Cumman, an Irish writer on the Paschal controversy, tells us that he now studied the question afresh for a year, and succeeded in having a synod called at Magh-Lene (628 or 629), at which it was decided to keep Easter in the following year at the same time as the rest of the Church. In view of disputes which followed this decision, a deputation from Ireland was sent to Rome, “like children having recourse to their mother.”¹⁴² On its return three years later with a report of the united celebration of Easter at Rome, Southern Ireland adopted the Roman Easter, probably c. 632. Bede expressly notes that the change took place as a direct result of the Pope’s representations.¹⁴³

Influenced, doubtless, by this, the clergy of Northern Ireland wrote to the Holy See in 640. *Sede vacante*, the archpriest Hilary (with the assent of the Pope-elect, John IV) replied to this letter, addressing the writers as “most beloved and holy,” fully acknowledging their status in the Catholic Church as bishops and priests, and strongly urging them to conform.¹⁴⁴ Gradually

¹⁴⁰ H.E. II. 4.

¹⁴¹ Jaffé, *op. cit.* I. 225.

¹⁴² *velut natos ad matrem.*—Cumman, *De controversia paschali*, P.L. LXXXVII. 977.

¹⁴³ *Ad admonitionem apostolicae sedis antistitis Pascha canonico ritu observare didicerunt.*—H.E. III. 3.

¹⁴⁴ H.E. II. 19.

these exhortations took effect among the Celtic Churches, so tenacious of their traditions and yet fundamentally loyal to Roman authority. Northern Ireland conformed in 697, Iona and its dependencies in 716, the Picts a little earlier.

The British were the last to fall into line. For them the whole position was complicated by the factor of racial animosity, but now that the danger of domination by Canterbury was over for a time, they were open to conviction, and they could appreciate the advantage of unity of practice in such a matter as Easter with the greater part of the Catholic world. The Cornish conformed, at the instance of St. Aldhelm pressing upon them the force of the authority of the Apostolic See, early in the eighth century; the Britons of Strathclyde seem to have done so a little before, in 703. In 721, Sedulius, a British bishop from the last-named region, was present at a Council in Rome, a sufficient evidence of the existence of normal relationships with the Holy See. Finally Wales itself, through the efforts of one of its own bishops, Elfodd—"chief bishop in the land of Gwynedd"¹⁴⁵ (i.e. North Wales)—adopted the Roman system during the second half of the eighth century.¹⁴⁶ But there was now no question of submission to Canterbury, so that, secure for the time being in its original ecclesiastical rights and privileges, the ancient Church found itself once more in full accord with the practice of the Apostolic See. Only with the political supremacy of the English kings and of their Norman successors would the claims of the younger alien see be forcibly pressed once more upon the Church of Wales.

The dispute with Augustine and the succeeding period of conflict over discipline has been treated at some length because its significance is so frequently missed or deliberately distorted. It has been seen that no hostility to Rome was involved, but that ultimately uniformity in the matters under dispute came from a sense of duty to the Apostolic See, and at its encouragement. There was no formal interruption of Catholic communion, save between extreme partisans, moved more by racial bitterness than by Catholic principles, on both sides in England and Wales. Throughout the whole period of tension and difference, both Irish and British travelled extensively on the Continent and undertook mission work there, in full communion with the local bishops in France, Germany and Italy, and with the Holy See itself. There was never any question of excommunication by Rome on the one side, nor of anti-papal prejudice or teaching on the other. The great Celtic Saints of the period, as has been seen in the case of St. Columbanus, were among the foremost of their time in recognizing to the full the claims of Rome, and they have always received the common veneration of united Catholic Christendom.

¹⁴⁵ Harl. M.S. 3859 (*Y Cymmrodor*, IX. 163).

¹⁴⁶ *Pasca commutatur apud brittones emendante elbodugo homine dei—ibid (ibid. 162).*

APPENDIX

SOME TYPICAL TESTIMONIES OF CELTIC SCHOLARS AND HISTORIANS.

Prof. J. E. LLOYD, the eminent Welsh historian.

No theological difference parted the Roman from the Celtic Church, for the notion that the latter was the home of a kind of primitive Protestantism of apostolic purity and simplicity is without any historical basis. . . . Nor is it to be supposed that Augustine would have asked them [*sc.* the British bishops] to join him in preaching the gospel to the English if he had not known them to be, from the Roman point of view, of unquestionable orthodoxy.

—*History of Wales*, I. 173.

The Revd. A. W. WADE-EVANS, author of "Welsh Mediaeval Law"; "The Life of St. David," etc.

Not only is there no evidence that the Britons and the Irish disputed the primacy and the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, as then understood, but such a notion is nothing but a by-product of German and English Protestantism, a mere alien figment, which has no place in Welsh tradition.

All Wales, anglican and nonconformist, has believed (and maybe still believes) that early Welsh Christianity was (as Mr. Newell puts it) "in opposition to the claims of the See of Rome." This belief has been a tragic blunder. And the time is ripe for all Wales to discard it. Welsh Christianity was indeed in opposition, and very much so. *Not, however, to Rome, but to Canterbury.*

—v. *St. David's Chronicle*, IV. p. 19.

(With this may be compared Fr. Thurston's conclusion : "That the people and clergy of Wales protested violently against the usurpations of Canterbury is beyond all question, but the pages of such conscientious investigators as Mr. Lloyd and Dr. Hartwell Jones contain little indication of any similar attitude of the Welsh people towards the supremacy of the Church of Rome.")

—*The Month*, cxxj. 239.)

DOM. L. GOUGAUD, *author of* "Les Chrétientés Celtiques"; "Christianity in Celtic Lands," etc.

Que cette Église ait longtemps gardé, au sein de la grande unité catholique, une physionomie originale, un peu en retrait et dans la pénombre, cela est trop clair; mais prétendre qu'elle ait fait preuve de sentiments hostiles, ou même défiants, ou même indifférents vis-à-vis de l'Église mère de la chrétienté, voilà qui est franchement en désaccord avec nos meilleurs sources d'information.

—*Les Chrétientés Celtiques*, p. 209.

F. LOOFS, *author of* "De Antiqua Britonum Scotorumque Ecclesia," etc.

Immo persuadeamus nobis primae aetatis Britonum ecclesiam de primatu Romani pontificis aliter non sensisse atque ceteras occidentalis imperii provincias. . . . Non habemus, quod Britones ineunte saeculo septimo infestos fuisse putemus episcopo Romano.

—*op. cit.* p. 24.

Mgr. L. DUCHESNE, *author of* "Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule," etc.

The Church in Great Britain resembled, in her relationship with Rome, the French and Spanish Churches, and indeed all the Western Churches in union with the Holy See.

—*Les Églises Séparées* (Eng. trans., p. 9).

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